

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6969

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 5008

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PDEV, PGOV, JM

SUBJECT: TENSION GROWS AS PNP APPROACHES CONFERENCE

REFERENCE: KINGSTON 4818

1. WITH THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (PNP) LESS THAN TWO WEEKS AWAY, TENSION BETWEEN THE "RADICAL" AND "MODERATE" FACTIONS APPEARS TO BE GROWING. AT ISSUE IS THE SELECTION OF DELEGATES FOR THE SEPTEMBER 8-11 MEETING.

2. THE TENSION BROKE INTO THE OPEN AT A MEETING IN LUCEA ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, ONE OF SIX HELD THAT DAY IN VARIOUS PARTS OF JAMAICA TO ELECT CHAIRMEN OF THE PARTY'S SIX REGIONAL COUNCILS. THE CONTESTANTS AT LUCEA WERE HOWARD COOKE, MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, AND FRANCIS TULLOCH, MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT. COOKE, A "MODERATE", A CURRENT VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PNP, AND PRESENT CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY'S REGION IV COUNCIL, HAS LONG BEEN A COMMANDING PNP FIGURE IN WESTERN JAMAICA. HIS CHALLENGER, TULLOCH, IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE "RADICAL" FACTION.

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THE MEETING, WHICH WAS PRECEDED BY ACTIVE CANVASSING BY BOTH COOKE AND TULLOCH, HAD HARDLY BEGUN WHEN THERE WERE CHARGES THAT BALLOT TAMPERING WAS PLANNED. A FREE-FOR-ALL THEN ENSUED, AND THE MEETING HAD TO BE ABANDONED. AMONG THOSE PRESENT FOR THE ABORTED MEETING WAS FOREIGN MINISTER P.J. PATTERSON, NOW IDENTIFIED WITH THE "MODERATES", AND LIKE COOKE A CURRENT VICE

PRESIDENT OF THE PNP.

3. ALTHOUGH PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE MEETING FAILED TO SAY WHO PLANNED TO RIG THE ELECTION, A PRESS SOURCE CLAIMS THAT IT WAS FOLLOWERS OF COOKE. THE SOURCE ADDED THAT THE "RADICAL" FACTION HAS BEEN WORKING DILIGENTLY TO BUILD ITS GRASS-ROOTS SUPPORT, OPERATING THROUGH THE PARTY ORGANIZATION WHICH IS CONTROLLED BY GENERAL SECRETARY D.K. DUNCAN, PERHAPS THE MOST PROMINENT OF THE "RADICALS". FEARING THAT COOKE MIGHT ACTUALLY LOSE HIS CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE REGIONAL BODY, THE PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTER'S SUPPORTERS WERE ALLEGEDLY ARRANGING FOR A NUMBER OF BOGUS VOTES TO BE CAST IN ORDER TO SECURE COOKE'S ELECTION. THE SIGNIFICANCE

OF THE LUCEA INCIDENT LIES, SAID THE SOURCE, IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF QUIET ORGANIZATIONAL WORK THA THE PNP "RADICALS" HAVE BEEN DOING AND THE APPREHENSION IT IS NOW CAUSING THE "MODERATES".

4. MEANWHILE, THE CONTEST FOR THE FOUR VICE PRESIDENCIES OF THE PNP, SEEN BY MOST OBSERVERS AS LIKELY TO OFFER THE CLEAREST INDICATION OF THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE TWO FACTIONS, HAS GAINED ANOTHER ASPIRANT. RALPH BROWN, MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, MAYOR OF KINGSTON UNTIL JANUARY, AND A MAN PERHAPS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS CONFIDENTIAL

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LOYALTY TO PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY, HAS NOW JOINED THE RACE. IN ADDITION, LABOR MINISTER ISAACS SAYS HE IS UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FROM "MODERATE" COLLEAGUES TO SEEK RE-ELECTION. WHILE PATTERSON, COOKE AND HOUSING MINISTER TONY SPAULDING HAVE NOT YET ANNOUNCED THEIR INTENTION TO STAND, ALL ARE EXPECTED TO DO SO.
IRVING

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